

Message Text

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22

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 030410Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TP RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4017

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 0558

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : PINT, TC

SUBJECT : IMPASSE CONTINUES ON UAE INTERNAL POLITICAL FRONT

1. HARD INFORMATION IS DIFFICULT TO COME BY, BUT FROM VARIETY OF SOURCES WE HEAR THAT SHAIKH ZAYED'S EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE EVEN MINIMAL PROGRESS ON MILITARY UNIFICATION FRONT, AND ON FORMATION OF NEW FEDERAL CABINET, ARE MEETING WITH CONTINUED FRUSTRATION.

2. LONG WRANGLE APPARENTLY TOOK PLACE BETWEEN SHAIKHS ZAYED AND RASHED UPON THEIR RETURN FROM HUNTING IN PAKISTAN OVER QUESTION OF APPOINTING SUCCESSOR TO RECENTLY RELINQUISHED BRITISH COLONEL WILSON, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE UNION DEFENCE FORCE. (BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTY OF FINDING LOCAL MAN WHO IS BOTH COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER AND POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE TO ALL OF RULERS, IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT FOREIGN ARAB WOULD BE SELECTED TO REPLACE WILSON.) SHAIKH RASHED REPORTEDLY LEFT FOR PAKISTAN UNDER IMPRESSION SEVERAL NAMES WOULD BE SELECTED FOR RULER'S CONSIDERATION, ONLY TO FIND UPON HIS RETURN THAT ZAYED

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HAD GONE AHEAD UNILATERALLY TO APPOINT JORDANIAN MAJOR GENERAL AWAD AL-KHALDI. ISSUE HAS NOW BEEN SETTLED IN FAVOR OF AL-KHALDI,

BUT ONLY AFTER ELABORATE FACE--SAVING DEVICE WAS SET UP WHEREBY RASHED WAS IN FACT PRESENTED WITH SEVERAL OTHER NAMES IN ADDITION TO AL-KHALDI'S ON UNDERSTANDING AL-KHALDI WAS TO BE FINAL CHOICE. EVERYBODY SEEMS TO AGREE AL-KHALDI IS GOOD OFFICER AND LOGICAL CHOICE.

3. CONSULTATIONS ABOUT NEW FEDERAL CABINET ALSO SEEM TO BE GOING NOWHERE. FOREIGN MINISTER SUWAIDI RECENTLY CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR THAT NO PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE OWING TO CONTINUED BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RULERS. FROM OTHERS WE HEAR THAT ZAYED AND SUWAIDI BELIEVE RESHUFFLE OF PORTFOLIOS IS POINTLESS UNLESS MAKTOUM IBN RASHED, PRESENT PRIME MINISTER, IS REPLACED BY SOMEONE WHO WILL PROVIDE STRONGER LEADERSHIP. SHAIKH RASHED, HOWEVER, HAS REPORTEDLY CHOSEN TO INTERPRET THIS ATTEMPT TO REMOVE HIS ELDEST SON AS AFFRONT TO HIS FAMILY DIGNITY. WHEN AMBASSADOR RECENTLY SAW SHAIKH SULTAN OF SHARJAH HE MENTIONED RUMOR THAT SULTAN HIMSELF WOULD SOON BE CHOSEN AS PRIME MINISTER, OR PERHAPS DEPUTY PM WITH SHAIKH ZAYED ASSUMING PM POSITION. SULTAN REPLIED ELLIPTICALLY THAT HE HAD AT LEAST PUT HIS AFFAIRS IN SHARJAH INTO STATE THAT ENABLED HIM TO MOVE "AT ANY TIME" TO ABU DHABI. BUT PRESSED ON POINT, HE SAID IT LOOKED AS IF "THEY FIRST WANT TO GIVE MAKTOUM ANOTHER CHANCE." WITH A DESPAIRING LAUGH SULTAN SAID THEY CAN'T EVEN FIND MAKTOUM TO INFORM HIM OF THEIR DECISION.

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